

REMARKS

Examiner Rossi is thanked for her careful consideration of the invention and for her thorough and detailed Office Action. For the reasons that follow, in light of the claim amendments, applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance.

By way of background, the invention is directed towards a method for preparing a laminate or prepreg using a hemicellulose adhesive. The pending independent claims are 1, 17, and 41. All the claims presented are based on the original specification and claims, and no new matter has been added.

As set forth in claim 1, the method for preparing a laminate includes providing a first laminae that comprises a non-woven mat of fibers, and impregnating the mat with a liquid adhesive composition that consists essentially of hemicellulose. In claim 17, the claimed method for preparing a prepreg includes providing a liquid pregnable substrate and impregnating the substrate with an adhesive composition that includes corn hull hemicellulose. The substrate comprises a non-woven mat of fibers. Finally, independent claim 41 specifies a method for preparing a laminate from a non-woven mat of fibers impregnated with a liquid adhesive composition that comprises corn hull hemicellulose.

A discussion of the various matters raised in the Office Action follows.

Discussion of Timing of Filing This Response

Due to inclement weather in Washington, D.C., the PTO was closed on September 18 and 19, 2003, and thus this response is timely filed today without the necessity of a fee for extension of time.

Discussion of "Consisting Essentially of" Claim Language

Although some claims subject to the Section 112 rejection are no longer pending, applicants respectfully submit that there is no contradiction in the use of the term "comprising" in a broad claim and "consist essentially of" in a narrower claim (see claim 24). The terms do not directly contradict each other when the "consist essentially of" claim is dependent from a comprising claim. In this sense, the dependent claim does further limit the dependent claim and is thus not improper.

Discussion of Art Rejections

As an initial matter, the independent claims are all based on either claim 2 or claim 18 as originally filed, and accordingly the Osgood, Rogers, and Giesfieldt preferences are not applicable.

All of the pending claims are patentable over the cited art. With respect to claim 1, there is no teaching or suggestion in the art to prepare a laminate from a non-woven mat of fibers wherein the adhesive composition consists essentially of hemicelluloses and water. It is noted that the Hsu teaching is of a composition that typically contains at most 68% by weight of hemicellulose. The cited art does not teach or suggest a composition that consists essentially of hemicellulose.

Likewise, with respect to claims 17 and 41, the prior art does not teach or suggest corn hull hemicellulose. Instead, the prior art principally is directed towards wood hemicelluloses, which is a different product.

For these reasons, allowance of the present application is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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